

Message Text

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INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMCONSUL KARACHI

CINCPAC

DIA WASHDC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT CH

SUBJECT: NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS - LEADERSHIP AND

IMPLICATIONS

REF: A. PEKING 0088 (NOTAL) B. HONG KONG 0675

1. IMAGE OF LEADERSHIP LINE-UP WITHIN THE STATE COUNCIL

WHICH EMERGED FROM THE FOURTH NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS

IS ONE OF PRAGMATISM WITH STRONG PARTY CONTROL. CHOU

EN-LAI CONFOUNDED MOST OBSERVERS BY COMING BACK

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STRONG AS PREMIER DESPITE HIS ILLNESS, AND UNDOUBTEDLY

HAD A BIG VOICE IN PICKING THE OTHER OFFICIALS. OF THE TWELVE VICE PREMIERS, ALL BUT FOUR ARE EITHER MEMBERS OR ALTERNATE MEMBERS OF THE POLITBURO, AND PARTY ELDERS CHEN YUN AND NIEH JUNG-CHEN, FORMER VICE PREMIERS, HAVE BEEN GIVEN HONORABLE BUT POWERLESS POSITIONS AS VICE CHAIRMEN OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS. THE LEADERSHIP OF THE STATE COUNCIL, BY ITS EXTENSIVE OVERLAP WITH THE POLITBURO, THUS APPEARS STRENGTHENED, AND WE MAY SEE A SORT OF SUPER CABINET WITH VARIOUS VICE PREMIERS OVERSEEING THE WORK OF KEY MINISTRIES.

2. AS POINTED OUT REF B, THERE WERE NOTABLE OMISSIONS OF POLITBURO MEMBERS FROM MAJOR STATE POSITIONS AS WELL. WANG TUNG-HSING (WHO LAST APPEARED AT LI FU-CHUN'S FUNERAL JANUARY 15), DID NOT APPEAR AT ALL, AND LI TEH-SHENG, WHO EARLIER THIS YEAR WAS THE TARGET OF HEAVY POSTER ATTACKS SEEMS TO HAVE SLIPPED AND MAY HAVE LOST HIS POSITION AS A VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARTY. CHINA'S TWO LEADING CULTURAL FIGURES, CHIANG CHING AND YAO WEN-YUAN WERE NOT SELECTED FOR EITHER A VICE PREMIER SLOT NOR MINISTERS OF CULTURE OR EDUCATION. THE FORMER POST WENT TO YU HUI-YUNG, WHO PREVIOUSLY WAS A MEMBER OF WU TEH'S CULTURAL GROUP UNDER THE STATE COUNCIL. YU HAS BEEN ACTIVE IN GREETING FOREIGN VISITORS AND WAS INVOLVED IN THE VISIT OF PRESIDENT NIXON AND IN THE HEATH VISIT THIS YEAR. NEW MINISTER OF EDUCATION CHOU JUNG-HSIN IS AN OLD LINE BUREAUCRAT WHO DURING THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION WAS BRANDED A CAPITALIST ROADER AND AN ACCOMPLICE OF TAO CHU.

3. BELOW THE RANKS OF THE VICE PREMIERS, THE NEW MINISTERIAL APPOINTEES, WITH A FEW NOTABLE EXCEPTIONS, APPEAR TO COME FROM THE RANKS OF PROFESSIONAL ADMINISTRATORS. A NUMBER OF THEM HAVE PREVIOUSLY BEEN IDENTIFIED ONLY AS RESPONSIBLE PERSONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE STATE COUNCIL. OF THE HOLDOVERS, THOSE ON WHOM WE HAVE INFORMATION OR WHOM WE HAVE MET COME FROM THE RANKS OF THE CIVILIAN PRAGMATISTS OR MILITARY TECHNICAL SPECIALISTS.

4. STRUCTURALLY, THE NPC DROPPED TWO EXISTING MINISTRIES,
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LABOR AND THE MINISTRY FOR THE ALLOCATION OF MATERIALS. TWO NEW ONES WERE CREATED, COAL INDUSTRY AND TRANSPORTATION, AREAS WHICH HAVE PLAGUED CHINA'S ECONOMY DURING THE PAST YEAR. IN ADDITION, THE MINISTRIES OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE, BOTH OF WHICH DISAPPEARED FOLLOWING THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION, WERE RESUSCITATED. WHILE IT IS DIFFICULT TO TELL FROM THE REPORTS, IT APPEARS THAT A NUMBER OF THE COMMISSIONS UNDER THE STATE COUNCIL MAY HAVE BEEN ELIMINATED.

5. WITH THE ADDITION OF TUNG PI-WU AND SOONG CHING-LING, WHO LOST THEIR POSITIONS AS VICE CHAIRMEN OF THE PRC WITH THE ABOLITION OF THOSE POSITIONS,PS63 4-,(OF VICE CHAIRMEN OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE NPC INCREASINGLY LOOK LIKE A GERIATRIC WARD. THE PRINCIPAL EXCEPTIONS ARE WU TEH AND SEVERAL OF THE BEST-KNOWN MINORITY NATIONALITY LEADERS. LI CHING-CHUAN, A FORMER POWER IN SZECHUAN, WAS RETURNED TO A DEGREE OF RESPECTABILITY BY HIS APPOINTMENT AS A VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE.

6. IN SUM, THE COMPOSITION OF THE GOVERNMENT EMERGING FROM THE FOURTT NPC STRIKES US AS ORDER ORIENTED AND LONG ON TECHNICAL EXPERTISE. A SUCCESSION LINE-UP MAY HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED IN THE STATE COUNCIL WITH THE RANKING OF TENG HSIAO-PING AND CHANG CHUN-CHIAO AS NUMBER TWO AND THREE RESPECTIVELY AFTER CHOU EN-LAI. TENG, AFTER ALL, IS SEVENTY HIMSELF AND MAY WELL BE A TRANSITIONAL FIGURE. CHANG AT 63 APPEARS CLOSE TO CHOU AND MAY WELL BE HIS LONG TERM SUCCESSOR. THE PARTY WILL CLEARLY RESUME TIGHT CONTROL OVER THE OPERATION OF THE GOVERNMENT, AND HUA KUO-FENG HAS BEEN NAMED THE MAN TO ENFORCE THAT CONTROL. THE LOSERS APPEAR TO BE THOSE PRESUMED TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH THE LEFT AND THE MILITARY REGION COMMANDERS, ALL OF WHOM WITH THE EXCEPTION OF CHEN HSI-LIEN, APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN RELEGATED TO RELATIVELY POWERLESS POSITIONS WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT APPARATUS. NOT ONLY DID PRESUMPTIVE RADICALS CHIANG CH'ING AND YAO WEN-YUAN FAIL TO SECURE GOVERNMENTAL POSITIONS, AS FAR AS WE CAN TELL NONE OF THEIR IDENTIFIABLE SUPPORTERS DID K. AS NOTED, BOTH THE MINISTRIES OF CULTURE AND EDUCATION (AREAS WHERE CHIANG AND YAO HAVE REPORTEDLY BEEN MOST ACTIVE) ARE HEADED BY INDIVIDUALS WHOSE HISTORY CONFIDENTIAL

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APPEARS TO LINK THEM WITH THE ESTABLISHED BUREAUCRACY. OF COURSE, POLITICAL KOWER IN THE PRC IS GAUGED MORE BY PARTY THAN BY GOVERNMENT RANK, BUT ABSENCE OF GOVERNMENT RANK ENTAILS LACK OF DAY-TO-DAY CONTROL OVER POLICY IMPLEMENTATION. AS TO THE EXISTENCE OF A POWER CONTEST, FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH NEW ZEALAND AMBASSADOR HARLAND MET REWI ALLEY IN THE FRIENDSHIP STORE JANUARY 20 AND WAS TOLD THAT THERE HAD BEEN A "HELL OF A FIGHT BETWEEN THE TWO GROUPS."

7. THE REACTION OF MAO TO ALL THS AND HIS ROLE IN IT IS DIFFICULT TO JUDGE AT THIS POINT. IN CONTRAST TO OUR EARLIER OBSERVATION (REF A) THAT THERE WAS A NOTABLE LACK OF REFERENCES TO THE CHAIRMAN IN THE EARLY NPC DOCUMENTS, ALTHOUGH PHYSICALLY NOT PRESENT HE HAS BEEN OMNIPRESENT SINCE. HIS PORTRAIT ADORNED THE DAIS OF THE GREAT HALL

AND DOMINATED THE FRONT PAGE OF THE PEOPLE'S DAILY OF JANUARY 19. CHANG CHUN-CHIAO'S REPORT ON THE REVISION OF THE CONSTITUTION AND THE CONSTITUTION ITSELF PAY HIM AMPLE OBEISANCE, PARTICULARLY WITH RESPECT TO THE LEADING ROLE OF "MAO TSE-TUNG THOUGHT." IT MAY BE THAT, WILLINGLY OR NOT, HE HAS BEEN ELEVATED TO SEMI-DEITY STATUS. HE AND HIS "THOUGHT" HAVING BEEN SUITABLY ENSHRINED, HIS PHYSICAL PRESENCE MAY NOT HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED NECESSARY AND IT IS CJFCEIVABLE THAT A MOVE IS NOW EVEN AFOOT TO GET THE CHINESE PEOPLE USED TO THE IDEA OF A CHINA CARRYING ON WITHOUT MAO. RECENT FOREIGN VISITORS HAVE NOTED HIS FRAILTY AND SIGNS OF ADVANCED AGE.
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